

# LYRICS OF LIFE

BY

FLORENCE EARLE COATES





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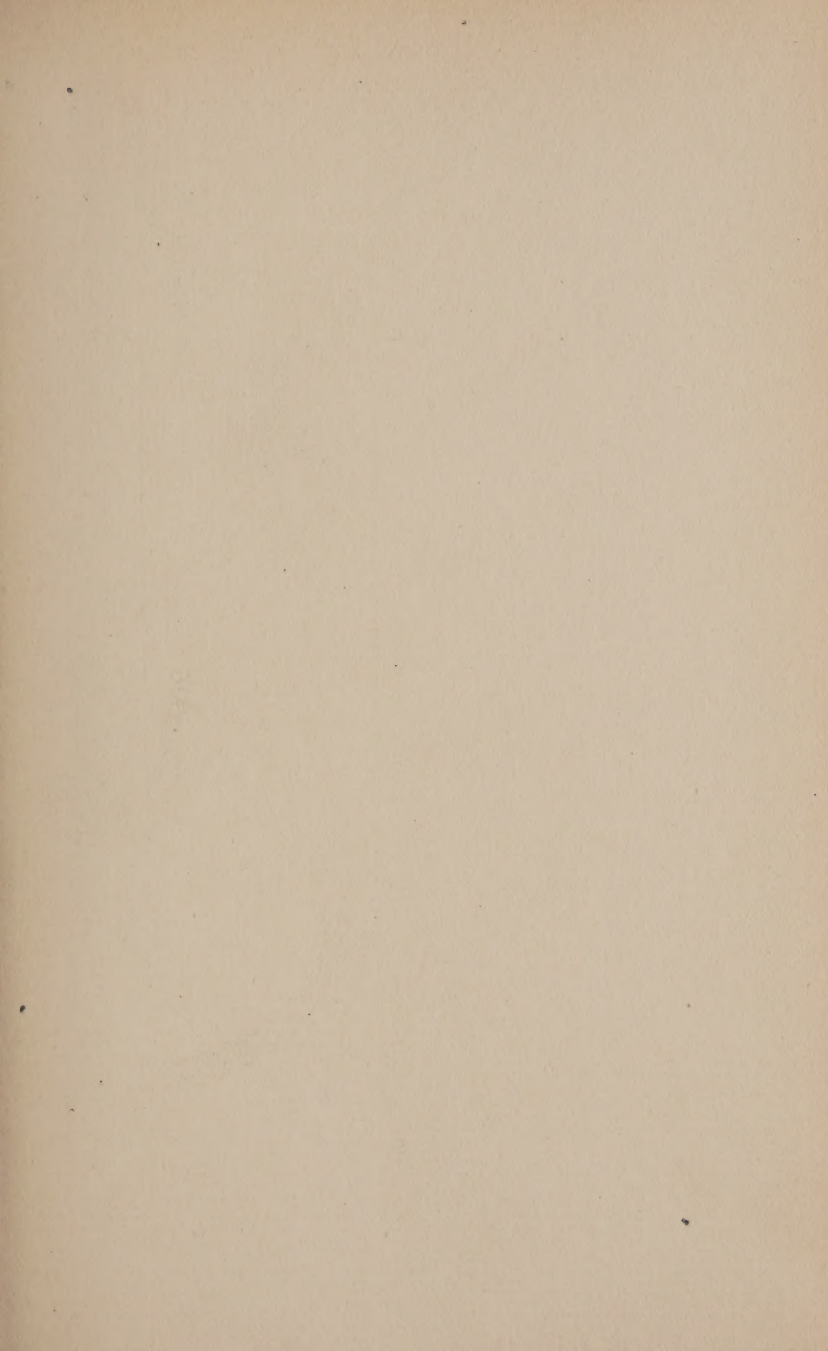
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By Florence Earle Coates

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POEMS. 12mo.

MINE AND THINE. 12mo.

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LYRICS OF LIFE



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FLORENCE EARLE COATES



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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TO  
S. WEIR MITCHELL  
PHYSICIAN, NOVELIST, AND POET  
WITH ADMIRATION  
AND GRATEFUL REGARD



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
EARTH'S MYSTERY . . . . .	I
A TRAVELLER FROM ALTRURIA . . . . .	2
INDIAN-PIPE . . . . .	5
LOVE, DOST THOU SMILE? . . . . .	6
THE LARK . . . . .	7
"HONOR, NOT HONORS" . . . . .	9
SONG: "SWEET IS THE BIRTH OF LOVE" . . . . .	10
MOTHER . . . . .	11
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN . . . . .	12
LEADERS OF MEN . . . . .	14
HELEN KELLER WITH A ROSE . . . . .	15
LEAVE-TAKING . . . . .	16
VESTAL . . . . .	17
THE HOUSE OF PAIN . . . . .	18
TO-DAY . . . . .	19
AFTER THE PAINTINGS BY GEORGE F. WATTS	
I. LOVE AND DEATH . . . . .	21
II. LOVE AND LIFE . . . . .	23
APRIL . . . . .	24
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW . . . . .	25

BEFORE THE DAWN . . . . .	27
AB HUMO . . . . .	29
NOCTURNE . . . . .	30
A HERO . . . . .	31
AMOR CREATOR . . . . .	32
THE MIRROR . . . . .	33
OF LOVE . . . . .	34
AFTER THE PLAY . . . . .	35
BEYOND . . . . .	40
A FAREWELL . . . . .	41
TO HENRY MILLS ALDEN . . . . .	43
SONG: "IF LOVE WERE BUT A LITTLE THING" . . . .	45
WITH BREATH OF SPRING . . . . .	46
A LOWLY PARABLE . . . . .	47
INFLUENCE . . . . .	49
THE POET . . . . .	50
L'AMOUR FAIT PEUR . . . . .	51
HONOR . . . . .	52
EURYDICE . . . . .	53
BEAUTY'S PATH . . . . .	56
FRITZ SCHEEL — A TRIBUTE . . . . .	57
REPROACH NOT DEATH . . . . .	58
MARS — 1907. . . . .	59
BESIDE A PLEASANT SHORE . . . . .	61
THE SUN-DIAL . . . . .	62



# CONTENTS

ix

RETROSPECT . . . . .	63
THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH . . . . .	65
THE PILGRIM . . . . .	66
MOTHER-LOVE . . . . .	69
"THE SENSE OF TEARS IN MORTAL THINGS" . . . . .	70
AN AMERICAN AT LINCOLN . . . . .	71
AFFINITY . . . . .	73
TWO BROTHERS . . . . .	74
CONFLICT AND REST . . . . .	78
CHILD-FANCIES	
I. ASPHODEL . . . . .	79
II. GATHERED WILD-FLOWERS . . . . .	80
DEARTH . . . . .	81
MID-OCEAN . . . . .	82
ON THE DEATH OF LADY CURZON . . . . .	83
BEREFT . . . . .	84
THE MARTYR JEWS . . . . .	85
LE GRAND SALUT . . . . .	86
INHERITOR . . . . .	87
WHEN YOU CAME . . . . .	88
THE YOUNG WIFE . . . . .	89
SONG: "LOVE NEVER IS TOO LATE" . . . . .	91
THE CHRIST OF THE ANDES . . . . .	92
EARTH'S BLOSSOMS . . . . .	93
ECHO CONSOLATRIX . . . . .	94

JOHN HAY . . . . .	95
PRIVILEGE . . . . .	97
DĀI NIPPON . . . . .	98
A LITTLE SONG . . . . .	101
THE EMPTY HOUSE . . . . .	102
KINDRED . . . . .	103
COURAGE . . . . .	105
CRUEL LOVE . . . . .	106
"EACH AND ALL" . . . . .	108
SAINT THERESA . . . . .	109
IN MEMORY OF CAROLINE FURNESS JAYNE . . . . .	111
AFTER . . . . .	112
THE VIOLIN . . . . .	113
PER ASPERA . . . . .	115
THE HERMIT . . . . .	116
THANKSGIVING . . . . .	117
POETRY . . . . .	118

# LYRICS OF LIFE





## LYRICS OF LIFE

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### EARTH'S MYSTERY

I LOOKED on Sorrow, tragical and dread ;  
Beheld the anguish in her sunken eyes,  
Which yearned no longer upward to the skies, —  
As dumbly pleading to be comforted, —  
But bent their blinded vision on the dead :  
The dead removed — how far ! — from human  
sighs,  
Lying majestic, as a conqueror lies,  
Indifferent to tears, so costly shed.

But as I pondered, seeking, soul-oppressed,  
To read the riddle of a world like this —  
Where Nature still seems waiting to destroy,  
I saw immortal Love descend and kiss,  
With timid wonder, reverent and blest,  
The quivering eyelids and the lips of Joy !

## A TRAVELLER FROM ALTRURIA

HE came to us with dreams to sell —  
Ah, long ago it seems !  
From regions where enchantments dwell,  
He came to us with dreams to sell, —  
And we had need of dreams.

Our thought had planned with artful care,  
Our patient toil had wrought,  
The roomy treasure-houses where  
Were heaped the costly and the rare, —  
But dreams we had not bought :

Nay ; we had felt no need of these,  
Until with dulcet strain,  
Alluring as the melodies  
That mock the lonely on the seas,  
He made all else seem vain ;

Bringing an aching sense of dearth,  
A troubled, vague unrest,  
A fear that we, whose care on Earth  
Had been to garner things of worth,  
Had somehow missed the best.

Then, as had been our wont before, —  
Unused in vain to sigh, —  
We turned our treasure o'er and o'er,  
But found in all our vaunted store  
No coin that dreams would buy.

We stood with empty hands : but gay  
As though upborne on wings,  
He left us ; and at set of day  
We heard him singing, far away,  
The joy of simple things !

He left us, and with apathy  
We gazed upon our gold ;  
But to the world's ascendancy  
Submissive, soon we came to be  
Much as we were of old.

Yet sometimes when the fragrant dawn  
In early splendor beams,  
And sometimes when, the twilight gone,  
The moon o'er-silvers wood and lawn,  
An echo of his dreams

Brings to the heart a swift regret  
That is not wholly pain,  
And, grieving, we would not forget  
The vision, hallowed to us yet, —  
The hope that seemed so vain.

4      A TRAVELLER FROM ALTRURIA

And then we envy not the throng  
    That careless passes by,  
With no remembrance of the song,  
Though we must listen still, and long  
    To hear it till we die !

## INDIAN-PIPE

IN the heart of the forest arising,  
Slim, ghostly, and fair,  
Ethereal offspring of moisture,  
Of earth and of air ;  
With slender stems anchored together  
Where first they uncurl,  
Each tipped with its exquisite lily  
Of mother-of-pearl ;  
'Mid the pine-needles, closely enwoven  
Its roots to embale, —  
The Indian-pipe of the woodland,  
Thrice lovely and frail !  
  
Is this but an earth-springing fungus —  
This darling of Fate  
Which out of the mouldering darkness  
Such light can create ?  
Or is it the spirit of Beauty,  
Here drawn by love's lure  
To give to the forest a something  
Unearthly and pure :  
To crystallize dewdrop and balsam  
And dryad-lisped words  
And starbeam and moonrise and rapture  
And song of wild birds ?

## LOVE, DOST THOU SMILE?

LOVE, dost thou smile — believing thou shalt cheat  
The triform Fates, because thou art so sweet?  
Thy beauty, which delights and makes afraid,  
Shall surely as the rose of autumn fade,  
And pain and grief shall find thee, and slow scorn;  
And thou shalt know neglect, and friendship  
hollow;  
And at the last, pale hope, thy light of morn,  
Shall bring thee to a goal where none will fol-  
low.

Love, dost thou weep — in all the sorrowing earth,  
Thou the one only thing of perfect worth?  
Midnight and morn alike to thee belong;  
Poor, thou art rich; defenceless, thou art strong;  
Upon thy altar burns perpetual fire  
That mounts and flames aloft to heaven's high  
portal;  
Thou quickenest, from evil, pure desire, —  
Triumphant in defeat, in death immortal!

## THE LARK

THERE is a legend somewhere told  
Of how the skylark came of old  
    To the dying Saviour's cross,  
And circling round that form of pain  
Poured forth a wild, lamenting strain,  
    As if for human loss.

Pierced by those accents of despair,  
Upon the little mourner there  
    Turning his fading eyes,  
The Saviour said, " Dost thou so mourn,  
And is thy fragile breast so torn,  
    That Man, thy brother, dies ?

" O'er all the world uplifted high,  
We are alone here, thou and I ;  
    And near to heaven and thee  
I bless thy pity-guided wings !  
I bless thy voice — the last that sings  
    Love's requiem for me !

" Sorrow shall cease to fill thy song ;  
These frail and fluttering wings grown strong,  
    Thou shalt no longer fly

Earth's captive — nay, but boldly dare  
The azure vault, and upward bear  
Thy transports to the sky ! ”

Soon passed the Saviour ; but the lark,  
Close hovering near Him in the dark,  
Could not his grief abate ;  
And nigh the watchers at the tomb,  
Still mourned through days of grief and gloom,  
With note disconsolate.

But when to those sad mourners came,  
In rose and amethyst and flame,  
The Dawn Miraculous,  
Song in which sorrow had no part  
Burst from the lark's triumphant heart —  
Sweet and tumultuous !

An instant, as with rapture blind,  
He faltered ; then, his Lord to find,  
Straight to the ether flew, —  
Rising where falls no human tear,  
Singing where still his song we hear  
Piercing the upper blue !



“HONOR, NOT HONORS”

HAST thou for honor laid ambition down?

Honor, itself, shall be thy sure reward,

A guard more certain than a flaming sword, —

A crown — above a crown.

Since it is *honor* stays thy lofty quest,

Welcome the high defeat thy spirit dares !

Aye, wear it proudly as a victor wears

The star upon his breast !

## SONG

### SWEET IS THE BIRTH OF LOVE

SWEET is the birth of love, and the awaking,  
The bashful dream, the faltering desire,  
The vision fair — of all fair things partaking —  
The wonder, the communicable fire :  
Sweet is the need to give and to obtain, —  
And sweet love's pain !

## MOTHER

At twilight here I sit alone,  
Yet not alone ; for thoughts of thee, —  
Pale images of pleasure flown, —  
Like homing birds, return to me.

Again the shining chestnut braids  
Are soft enwreathed about thy brow,  
And light — a light that never fades —  
Beams from thine eyes upon me even now,

As, all undimmed by death and night,  
Remembrance out of distance brings  
Thy youthful loveliness, alight  
With ardent hope and high imaginings.

Ah, mortal dreams, how fair, how fleet !  
Thy yearnings scant fulfilment found ;  
Dark Lethe long hath laved thy feet,  
And on thy slumber breaks no troubling sound ;

Yet distance parts thee not from me,  
For beauty — or of twilight or of morn —  
Binds me, still closer binds, to thee,  
Whose heart sang to my heart ere I was born.

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

“Eripuit coelo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.”

FRANKLIN ! *our* Franklin ! America's loved son ! —

Loved in his day, and now, as few indeed :  
Franklin ! whose mighty genius allies won,  
To aid her, in great need !

Franklin ! with noble charm that fear allays, —

Tact, judgment, insight, humor naught could  
dim ! —

“Antiquity,” said Mirabeau, “would raise  
Altars to honor him !”

How should one country claim him, or one hour ?

Bound to no narrow circuit, and no time,  
He is the World's — part of her lasting dower,  
One with her hope sublime.

His kindred are the equable and kind

Whose constant thought is to uplift and bless ;  
The witty, and the wise, the large of mind,  
Who ignorance redress :

His kindred are the bold who, undismayed,

Believe that good is ever within reach, —

All who move onward — howsoe'er delayed —  
Who learn, that they may teach :

Who overcoming pain and weariness,  
In life's long battle bear a noble part ;  
All who, like him, — greatest of gifts ! — possess  
The genius of the *heart* !

How should we praise whose deeds belittle praise,  
Whose monument perpetual is our land  
Saved by his wisdom, in disastrous days,  
From tyranny's strong hand ? —

How praise whose Titan-thought, beyond Earth's  
ken  
Aspiring, tamed the lightnings in revolt,  
Subduing to the will of mortal men  
The awful thunderbolt ?

Our debt looms larger than our love can pay :  
We know not with what homage him to grace  
Whose name outlasts the monument's decay, —  
A glory to our race !

With tireless hope, he seems to move before  
Beck'ning to all that helpful is and free :  
A lover of mankind, inheritor  
Of Immortality !

## LEADERS OF MEN

WHEN they are dead, we heap the laurels high  
Above them where, indifferent, they lie :

    We join their deeds to unaccustomed praise,  
    And crown with garlands of immortal bays  
Whom, living, we but thought to crucify.

As mountains seem less glorious viewed too nigh,  
So, often, do the great whom we decry

    Gigantic loom to our astonished gaze —  
    When they are dead ;

For, shamed by largeness, littlenesses die ;

And partisan and narrow hates put by,

    We shrine our heroes for the future days ;

    And to atone our ignorant delays

With fond and emulous devotion try, —

    When they are dead !

## HELEN KELLER WITH A ROSE

OTHERS may see thee ; I behold thee not ;  
Yet *most* I think thee, beauteous blossom, mine :  
For I, who walk in shade, like Proserpine —  
Things once too briefly looked on, long forgot —  
Seem by some tender miracle divine,  
When breathing thee, apart,  
To hold the rapturous summer warm within my  
heart.

We understand each other, thou and I !  
Thy velvet petals laid against my cheek,  
Thou feelest all the voiceless things I speak,  
And to my yearning makest mute reply :  
Yet a more special good of thee I seek,  
For God who made — oh, kind ! —  
Beauty for one and all, gave *fragrance* for the blind !

## LEAVE-TAKING

THOUGH hence I go — though with the fading day  
I seem to fade away, —  
Like to a primrose which beguiling Spring,  
Too early fanning with perfumèd wing,  
Tempt, only to betray :

Though soon I sleep, — yet sorrow not, nor fear  
That you shall lose me, dear !  
For not one cherished memory —  
One single yearning of your heart for me,  
Shall fail to bring me near !

How strange could death divide who, living, share  
All happiness and care !  
Still as you gaze, bereft of your desire,  
On the dull embers of your lonely fire,  
You shall behold me there,

And though through hiemal glooms you sometimes  
learn  
To doubt, nor hope discern, —  
Yet when the timid firstling buds awake,  
And birds come back and sing, your heart to  
break, —  
Always, I shall return !



## VESTAL

SHE dwelt apart, as one whom love passed by,  
Yet in her heart love glowed with steadfast beam ;  
And as the moonlight on a wintry stream  
With paly radiance doth glorify  
All barren things that in its circle lie,  
So, from within, love shed so fair a gleam  
About her, that it made her desert seem  
A paradise, abloom immortally.

Some rashly pitied her ; but, to atone,  
If one perchance gazed long upon her face,  
He grew to feel himself more strangely lone —  
Love lent her look such amplitude of grace ;  
Yet who that would have made that love his own  
Aught worthy had to offer in its place ?

## THE HOUSE OF PAIN

UNTO the Prison House of Pain none willingly  
repair, —

The bravest who an entrance gain  
Reluctant linger there, —  
For Pleasure, passing by that door, stays not to  
cheer the sight,  
And Sympathy but muffles sound and banishes the  
light.

Yet in the Prison House of Pain things full of  
beauty blow, —

Like Christmas-roses, which attain  
Perfection 'mid the snow, —  
Love, entering, in his mild warmth the darkest  
shadows melt,  
And often, where the hush is deep, the waft of  
wings is felt.

Ah, me ! the Prison House of Pain ! — what lessons  
there are bought ! —

Lessons of a sublimer strain  
Than any elsewhere taught, —  
Amid its loneliness and gloom, grave meanings  
grow more clear,  
For to no earthly dwelling-place seems God so  
strangely near !

## TO-DAY

WHERE hast thou gone, my Day?

I meant to follow,  
Extracting from thine every hour its sweet ;  
But thou, beguiling hope with pledges hollow,  
Art flown on wingèd feet.

Hardly I greet thy morn,  
The glory dwindles ;  
And as I plan thy moments with delight,  
The evening-primrose in my pathway kindles  
Her taper for the night.

Ah, too precipitate !  
Might I not linger  
To gather a stray blossom by the way,  
But pointing onward with thy warning finger,  
Thou must outstrip me, Day?

Gladly I welcomed thee,  
An eager lover  
Who deemed he knew each fleeting moment's cost.  
Is there no way, no method, to recover  
The treasure I have lost?

Ah, no ! From Time, alas !

One may not borrow ;

Nor move him what is squandered to restore.

The tide flows back, and there may dawn a  
morrow ;

*Thee* I shall find no more.

AFTER THE PAINTINGS BY  
GEORGE F. WATTS

I

LOVE AND DEATH

A MOMENT, Death! — only a moment more!  
She is my all; have pity! stay thy hand!  
Behold, a fearful suppliant I stand! —  
Take not away what thou canst not restore!

At thy approach the birds have ceased to sing,  
The roses of my lintel droop and pine,  
The genial sun itself doth coldly shine,  
And in thy shadow all seems darkening.

That thou art merciless, as men declare,  
I'll not believe. Thy look is kind, not stern;  
And they who judge thee ill, of me shall learn  
To know thee better, Death! — for thou wilt spare!

See, thou art strong! and I am weak — so weak!  
All beings that draw breath at last are thine:  
Thou wilt not covet this sole joy of mine —  
Nor to deprive me of its solace seek?

Yet come no nearer ! Shouldst thou pass this door,  
My heart that so importunes thee would break.  
Go back a little ! for compassion's sake,  
Go back ! and hither — ah, return no more !

In vain, in vain ! O awful Majesty !  
Thy very breath appalls my fluttering heart.  
Invader dread, what strength have I, or art —  
What, save my anguish, to oppose 'gainst thee ? . . .

Enter ! the door is open. Yet this much  
Let my submission of thy pity earn :  
When through the shaded portal thou return,  
On me — me, also, lay thy easeful touch !

## II

### LOVE AND LIFE

THY hand I press,  
And am not *much* afraid :  
Though danger lie in wait in every glade,  
Thou, Love, hast might to comfort and caress  
My helplessness.

The way is steep ;  
But thou wilt soothe its pain ;  
And when at last the utmost height we gain,  
To the soft shelter of thy wings I'll creep,  
And sleep — and sleep.

The way is long ;  
But though I wearied be,  
Still gazing upward, I shall gaze on thee ;  
And thy angelic voice, more sweet than song,  
Will make me strong.

Whate'er betide,  
I, Love, — who may not know  
Whence I have journeyed, nor the way I go, —  
Am still content to follow at thy side,  
O deathless guide !

## APRIL

SWELLING bud and fond suggestion,  
Wafting of perfume,  
Tearful rapture, thrilling question  
Of restraint or bloom,  
Life all dreamlessly asleeping,  
As in death, but now,  
Upward to the sunshine creeping, —  
April, that is thou !

Mystery's authentic dwelling,  
Faith's expanding wing,  
Maiden loveliness foretelling  
Fuller blossoming,  
Prophet of the new creation,  
Priestess of the bough,  
Month of the imagination, —  
April, that is thou !



HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807-1882

If tasting Heliconian springs  
He of their waters drank not deep,  
If, smiling, he beheld not things  
Revealed to eyes that weep,  
If dread Dodona's Oracle  
And Delphi's voice for him were mute,  
If grave Minerva in his path  
Dropped never silver flute, —

Yet beauty wove a magic spell  
For him, and early, at his need,  
Upon a bed of asphodel  
He found a tuneful reed, —  
The Syrinx-reed Thessalian,  
Of plaintive, far renown,  
The universal pipe of Pan, —  
Where the god laid it down.

Right reverently from the ground  
He lifted up the sacred thing,  
Accepted it with awe profound,  
With faith unfaltering ;

And when its music forth he drew  
 Earth half forgot her ancient pain,  
 For Marsyas himself ne'er blew  
 A purer, sweeter strain !

Though some there be who, self-attired  
 In robes of judgment they misuse,  
 Protest that he was not inspired  
 By the authentic Muse, —  
 Love, granting all his faults to these,  
 Forever holds his name apart,  
 Who moved not senseless stones and trees,  
 But the quick human heart.

“The people’s poet.” Did he lack  
 Return? He served in high degree  
 The people, and they gave him back  
*Their* immortality !  
 Time careless grows of costly wit,  
 Brave monuments are quickly gone, —  
 But that which on the heart is writ  
 Lives on, and on, and on !

## BEFORE THE DAWN

I LOOKED on beauteous forms, as I lay dreaming,  
But on no form as beautiful as thine,  
Who here, amid the moonbeams white and holy,  
Standest in silence by this bed of mine.

I looked on faces fair, as I lay sleeping,  
But on no face that seemed so nobly sweet  
As that which in the pallid light above me  
My wondering, half-awakened sense doth greet.

Who and what art thou? Have I kept thee waiting?  
My sleep was as a river deep and calm;  
Bring'st thou perchance some word of import for  
me?  
Hast thou for broken hearts, like mine, some  
balm?

Who and what art thou? In my tranquil vision  
I gazed through rifted clouds on azure skies, —  
I seemed to gaze beyond them, — but naught  
moved me  
Like the deep pity in thy brooding eyes.

Why art thou here to-night? I have been lonely —  
Have waited, prayed, for such an one as thou,

To still with presence kind my pulse's throbbing,  
To lay a cooling touch upon my brow.

Tell me thy name ! Then, pain and fear forgotten,  
I straightway will arise and follow thee,  
Who, as I think, art hither come to guide me  
To larger hope and opportunity.

Tell me thy name ! I long, I need, to hear it !  
Thy name ! — I may not plead, for failing  
breath, —

*With look compassionate, the august stranger  
Made answer very softly : " I am Death."*

## AB HUMO

THE seedling hidden in the sod  
Were ill content immured to stay;  
Slowly it upward makes its way  
And finds the light at last, thank God !

The most despised of mortal things —  
The worm devoid of hope or bliss,  
Discovers in the chrysalis  
Too narrow space for urgent wings.

These are my kindred of the clay :  
But as I struggle from the ground  
Such weakness in my strength is found,  
I seem less fortunate than they.

Yet though my progress be but slow,  
And failure oft obscure the past,  
I, too, victorious at last,  
Shall reach the longed-for light, I know !

## NOCTURNE

THE houseless wind has gone to rest  
In some rude cavern-bed of ocean,  
And Neptune smooths each foamy crest,  
At Dian's will, with meek devotion ;  
The shepherd, gathering his sheep,  
Has brought them safely to the fold, —  
And in my arms my world I hold !  
Sleep !

Forespent with hunting on the hill,  
My truant, in the dusk returning,  
Finds the lone heart, he left at will,  
With the one worship burning.  
The moonlight pales — the shade grows deep —  
The nightingale doth silence break !  
Ah, love, till first the lark shall wake,  
Sleep !


No homeless wanderer art thou !  
Here, pillowed safe, thy head is lying.  
The nightingale ! Ah, listen now !  
What passion — death itself defying !  
Peace ! All the stars thy vigil keep,  
And fragrant breathes each mystic flower  
That blooms to-night in Dreamland bower :  
Sleep !

## A HERO

HE sang of joy ; whate'er he knew of sadness  
He kept for his own heart's peculiar share :  
So well he sang, the world imagined gladness  
To be sole tenant there.

For dreams were his, and in the dawn's fair shining,  
His spirit soared beyond the mounting lark ;  
But from his lips no accent of repining  
Fell when the days grew dark ;

And though contending long dread Fate to master,  
He failed at last her enmity to cheat,  
He turned with such a smile to face disaster  
That he sublimed defeat.



## AMOR CREATOR

Love is enough : were all we fondly cherish  
To pass as visions melt at dawn of day,  
Were bud and blossom, fruit and leaf, to perish,  
Love could rebuild them in his perfect way ;  
For he who makes the tides to ebb and flow,  
Each secret of creation well doth know.

His warmth illumines the glow-worm's fickle spark,  
And beams in Aldebaran's steadfast fire :  
With him there is no winter and no dark ;  
The font, the burning font, of pure desire,  
All forms of beauty unto him belong, —  
The rose, the avalanche, the wild bird's song.

On Latmos' height pale Dian dreams about him,  
His voice low echoes in the ocean shell,  
The bee could fill no honey-cup without him,  
The violet no fragrant secret tell :  
Remote yet near, changeful yet still the same,  
Love is creation's breath and vital flame !



## THE MIRROR

POET, why wilt thou wander far afield?

Turn again home! There, also, Nature sings,  
And to thy heart — her magic-mirror — brings  
All images of life : thence will she yield  
Every emotion in Man's breast concealed :

Love, hate, ambition, — hope, that heavenward  
wings, —

The peasant's toil, the care that waits on  
kings, —

All, in thy heart's clear crystal, plain revealed.

Hast thou forgotten? One there was who turning  
His poet-vision inward, through the years,  
Found Falstaff's wit, and Prospero's high yearning,  
Shared Hamlet's doubt, the madness that was  
Lear's, —

Saw Wolsey's pride, and Romeo's passion, burn-  
ing, —

Knew Desdemona's truth, and felt her tears !

## OF LOVE

OF Love the gods require no task,  
Content to grant whate'er may ask  
    The boy from Venus sprung, —  
For howsoever grave his mask,  
    They know the lad is young :

Aye, young, indeed ! Though, spite of warning,  
Often at dusk, all prudence scorning,  
    He daring sail unfurls, —  
Yet, fragrant still, the breath of morning  
    Lingers amid his curls.

What count takes he of days or years ? —  
E'en pain itself but more endears  
    The strange, immortal boy,  
Who whilst his eyes o'er-brim with tears,  
    Yet keeps the heart of joy !

## AFTER THE PLAY

You say I 'm dying ! It is so, I think :  
All pain has left me, and I seem to sink —  
A child, content, back to the Mother's breast.  
Life grew full sweet of late, — but death is best.

I wanted just this one last quiet hour  
To tell you how hope grew fruition's flower, —  
Giving me, in a moment, bliss to know,  
Beyond what tranquil ages might bestow.

You must not weep, my friend ! Consider still  
How many lives go frustrate of their will ;  
How many spend in vain, and fruitless tire ! —  
I near the goal of my supreme desire.

Your tears reproach the happiness I feel,  
And from this dear contentment something steal.  
Smile, if you can, beloved ! nor delay  
What I would tell you ere I go my way.

. . . . .  
Love gives but as Love will : this have I proved,  
Who through long wistful years have vainly loved,  
Yet find my life at last on death's sheer brink —  
Of purest joy from lethal fountains drink.  
. . . . .

You know 't was not my right to dream of her,  
Though I had served her long — love's pensioner —  
Grateful for modest favor at her hands,  
For mere acceptance, or for mild commands, —

But on that night, across the theatre  
I saw her come, and felt the restless stir  
Of mad desires held in leash till then :  
A longing to stand equal with the men

Who, for no merit, dared to keep her side, —  
Suspecting not the barriers that divide  
Natures like hers from those of meaner birth.  
I knew her throned above me, felt the worth

Of things they recked not of — her richest dower —  
Yet longed that life should yield me for one hour  
The right to stand before her — even as these ?  
Nay ; but the right to fall before her knees,

To touch in worship her white garment's hem,  
To win the smile so lightly given them  
Because her heart with happiness o'erflowed,  
Unconscious of the largess it bestowed.

Ah, me ! — to think, what barren pain I felt !  
Hopeless as one who in a desert dwelt,  
Exiled from all that made his soul's delight,  
I gazed upon her, — was it, friend, last night ?

The Play — what matter? — it drew near the end,  
Scarce marked by me. You know the rest, my  
friend :

Waiting I sat there full of sad desire,  
When, suddenly, it came — that cry of “ Fire ! ”

How suddenly! I started to my feet :  
But — as when two on-rushing torrents meet  
And break the one the other — mad with fear,  
The panic-stricken people, deaf to hear

Counsel or warning, in that burning tomb  
Hurtled each other, battling to their doom.  
Kind God, blot out the scene — soon past !  
I to a column near me clinging fast,

Resisted the fell tide that onward bore  
Its helpless prey with hideous uproar.  
Twice had I lost my footing ; yet I clave,  
As one who struggles more than life to save —

My every thought of her ; but when at last,  
Sore bruised and breathless, as one shoreward  
cast

After rude shipwreck, I dared raise my eyes —  
Seeking in that vast Hell my Paradise, —

There, like some virgin image carved in stone,  
She stood in her white radiance — alone.

Where were the men that loved her, as they said ?  
Ah, bitter "where" ! They, all, too rashly fled,

Had entered that ignoble human strife,  
Paying a shameful price for paltry life.  
She read my soul, I think ; and then — she smiled.  
Nay, friend, — imagine not my speech grown wild ! —

I tell you true : in that appalling place  
She smiled — the calm of heaven in her face.  
Her service had been long my soul's emprise ;  
Yet a new, wistful wonder lit her eyes,

And pale — ay, pale as Hades' death-crowned  
queen —

Across the fatal barriers between,  
Her glad look seemed to say : — " At last, I know !  
You, who alone have loved me, *could* not go !

" All help were vain. — Stay ! — let me see your  
face ! "

So plead the look ; then, with a poignant grace,  
Her form bent toward me, her white arms apart,  
She gave me the veiled secret of her heart.

Think you we marked the fiery sepulchre  
In which we stood, — thence nevermore to stir ?  
A glory strange enwrap us. — Then, my friend,  
I woke, and saw your face, and knew the end, —

Not that which you *suppose* — the end of strife, —  
Not dissolution — and not loss — but life !

. . . . .  
I think she felt no anguish, knew no fear,  
So mercifully swift the flames drew near ;

For, even as she smiled, narcotic death  
Enveloped her, and stifled her sweet breath ;  
And the fire passed her by and left her there,  
Like to a sleeping child, untouched and fair.

. . . . .

All — all that life withheld — is mine at last !  
With love, with God, — believe me, — there 's no  
past.

The future waits — it calls — I must not stay !  
The night is over, — look ! the dawn — of Day !

## BEYOND

HAD we the present — only that, no more !  
Were the past, hidden by Oblivion's door,  
    Impenetrable to our backward gaze, —  
    Its lessons lost, its joyful, tearful days !  
Were there no vision of untrodden ways,  
No distant fields of morn, — no blooms unfound, —  
No skyey hopes to beckon from the ground, —  
    No loves whose waiting welcome ne'er betrays !

Were there no promise of returning spring  
When autumn preens a migratory wing,  
    And on earth's hearth the fire is burning low ! —  
    Were there no future with romance aglow,  
    When the chilled blood within the vein moves  
        slow,  
No dream of a fair dawning, in the night, —  
No fond expectancy, — no pledge of light  
    Fairer than cloud-veiled days of winter know !

. . . . .  
To-morrow ! — mystic word of the Ideal !  
What were all else, wert thou not there to heal  
    The deepest hurt that e'er the present gave ?  
    Friend ! Ever wise consoler ! We are brave  
    Because of thee ! Trusting thy might to save,  
We journey onward toward an unknown land,  
And close, and closer still, we clasp thy hand, —  
    Nor will be parted from thee at the grave.



## A FAREWELL

"The utmost for the highest."

*Motto of George F. Watts.*

AVE! Thou goest from us,  
    Apart from us to dwell;  
Through sacrifice to find thyself.  
    Ave! — but not farewell.

Thou hast dreamed a dream of Leisure;  
    Thou hast heard her call thy name, —  
The handmaid of enduring Art,  
    Who feeds the quenchless flame, —  
And after the Ideal  
    Thou wistfully would'st fare,  
Before whose shrine 't is blest to wait, —  
    Though ne'er to enter there!

Go forth, — for thou hast willed it, —  
    Untrammelled as the sea!  
To find new forms of loveliness,  
    Go forth! Lo, thou art free  
To hope, to learn, to listen,  
    To be breathed upon, inspired,  
To wait on the unhasting gods,  
    With soul intent, untired;

Careless of gain or profit,  
Of markets, or applause,  
To yield thy heart to Nature's heart,  
To learn her dearer laws ;  
To gaze beyond the present, —  
From the fleeting view of things,  
To lift the vision up and up ;  
To feel the growth of wings ;

Through love and self-denial,  
To gain at last the goal  
That hidden from the vulgar gaze  
Beckons the purer soul ;  
Naught asking of the moment,  
Content to strive and strive, —  
Knowing when lesser gods depart,  
The gods themselves arrive !

. . . . .

Ave ! Thou goest from us,  
Apart from us to dwell ;  
Through sacrifice to find thyself.  
Ave ! — but not farewell !

## TO HENRY MILLS ALDEN

OUR days by deeds are numbered, — and by dreams,  
If we dream well and nobly ; for it seems  
That he who would respond  
By deed to what is loveliest and best,  
Must, holding to the near and manifest,  
Find in the things beyond,  
Faith, ay, and courage, duty to fulfil, —  
Hearing the higher voices calling still.

Thy youth those voices heard on many a height,  
In the fresh dawn and the all-fragrant night,  
For thou wast mountain-born ;  
And looking to the hills, — from boyhood-days  
Thy comrades, — learned the wonder in their  
ways,  
Reglorified each morn;  
Gaining, with deeper draughts of upland breath,  
Large images of Life and lordly Death.

And as a man but follows his lodestar, —  
For our ideals make us what we are, —  
Through self-effacing years,  
Thou, toiling where the burdened city moans,  
Hast lost no accent of the higher zones.  
Smiles, and the truth of tears,

And memories, and melodies unsung,  
Have visited thy heart, and kept it young.

Thou hast had strength, where many failed, to glean  
Good from a doubtful harvest ; thou hast seen

Light where the shade lay deep.

The future with the present praise must blend

To crown thy triumphs worthily, dear friend ;

But we remembrance keep

More grateful, even, for thyself than them,

And lay upon thy brow love's anadem.

## SONG

If love were but a little thing —

Strange love, which, more than all, is great —  
One might not such devotion bring,  
Early to serve and late.

If love were but a passing breath —

Wild love — which, as God knows, is sweet —  
One might not make of life and death  
A pillow for love's feet.

## WITH BREATH OF SPRING

THE air is full of balm, I know ;  
The winter vanished long ago.  
In sheltered plots along the street  
Crocus and tiny snowdrop meet,  
And children skip about and play —  
Rejoicing in the glad noonday —  
Or loiter 'neath some budding bough  
Where bird-notes will be warbled now —  
Outside the prison wall.

The brook, by winter long enchained,  
Flows through the meadow unrestrained ;  
The violet will blossom soon,  
The moth will break from the cocoon ;  
And where the happy children sing,  
The fledgling bird will try his wing, —  
But, O my heart ! the sunshine there ! —  
The grateful shade ! — the boon, free air —  
Outside the prison wall !

## A LOWLY PARABLE

At first the birds — so runs the gentle story  
The priest of Buddha to the people told,  
With only feet to bear them o'er the mould,  
Hopped to and fro, nor marked the varied glory

Of days and seasons in their wondrous passing ;  
Saw not the wintry branches overhead  
By vernal airs revived, engarlanded,  
Saw not the clouds, their forms in rivers glassing,

Dreamed not of birch-tree-haunts on lovely islands  
Where sunsets tarry late, as loth to go, —  
Nor ever knew what winds delicious blow  
From piny mountain-peaks o'er verdurous highlands.

Now here, now there, absorbed in one endeavor —  
One single aim — poor birds ! — the search for  
food,  
They looked on all which aided that as good, —  
Toward any larger goal aspiring never.

But came a morning, strange and unforeboded,  
When from their tiny shoulders started things,  
Feathered atip, which presently were wings, —  
Full irksome to the birds, and heavy-loaded.

Impatient of the undesired burden,  
They huddled on the ground, disconsolate,  
While some complained reproachfully : —  
“ Does Fate  
Lay on us this new care in lieu of guerdon

“ For all that we have done and borne so bravely?  
Is't not enough that oft, through blight and snow,  
We starve — we who from toil no respite  
know ? ”  
They drooped, they pined ; but said the bluebird  
gravely,

His pretty head with gallant air uplifting :  
“ This is indeed a burden which we bear —  
An added burden ; yet — O why despair ? ” —  
Then, from one foot to t' other his weight shifting,

He hopped about, in valor growing bolder,  
Till — for new effort new ambition brings —  
He found at last that he could *stretch* his  
wings ! . . .  
Straightway the birds forgot the day grown colder —

Forgot the future's care, the past's privation ;  
And when, their fond desires fixed on high,  
They knew — O happy birds ! — that they could  
fly, —  
The burden had become their exaltation !



## INFLUENCE

My friend leaned o'er the flowery brink  
Of evil, bending down to drink ;  
But though he stooped, resolved to take  
    The harmful draught despite my fears,  
He yielded for my pleading's sake —  
    Feeling my love and tears.

Again he stoops ; again I long  
To save a fellow-man from wrong.  
He was my friend ! Fain, in this hour,  
    Would I defend him as before :  
I strive — but I have lost the power,  
    Who love him now no more.

## THE POET

Is he alone? The myriad stars shine o'er him,  
The flowers bloom for him mid wintry frost;  
He needs not sleep to dream, — and dreams restore  
him  
Whatever he has lost.

Is he forsaken? Beauty's self is nigh him,  
Closer than bride to the fond lover's arms, —  
Veiled, guarding still, to lift and glorify him,  
The *mystery* of her charms.

Unto his soul she speaks in accents moving —  
In moving accents meant for him alone,  
Revealing, past all visioned heights of loving,  
Far-beckoning heights unknown.

## L'AMOUR FAIT PEUR

A COWARD is man, yet a hero  
Whose will overmasters his fear,  
Till peril no longer appals him,  
And danger itself groweth dear.  
Poised and strong, asking no intervention,  
He hazards the rock and the shoal ;  
One only thing halts his pretension —  
Love frightens the soul.

Self-disciplined, slowly but surely,  
Disaster accustomed to brave,  
He makes a companion of sorrow,  
Nor falters at threat of the grave ;  
Nay, often would hold it at nearer  
Approach a beneficent goal —  
But, ah ! with the thought of one dearer,  
Love frightens the soul !

## HONOR

DIVINE abstraction, shadowy image, dream  
More vital than substantial shapes made strong  
By all the tireless energies of wrong, —  
Who should deny thy being would blaspheme  
The power that made thy loveliness supreme,  
Lending thee accents of auroral song  
To comfort those who unto thee belong —  
Though they go down to dark Cocytus' stream.

Patient as Time art thou, eternal one!  
Yet who may change thy judgments — or destroy?  
The conqueror whom wily Egypt won  
Found with life's honeyed draught a bitter blent;  
And Hector, fallen by the walls of Troy,  
Looked up, and saw thy face, and was content.

## EURYDICE

I HEAR thy voice ! —

Ah, love, I hear thy voice !  
Faint as the sound of distant waters falling,  
I hear thy voice above me calling, calling, —  
And my imprisoned heart,  
Long held from thee apart,  
Responsive thrills, half-tempted to rejoice.

In Hades though I be,  
Where the unnumbered dead abide  
In uneventful, sunless eventide,  
I yet live on, — for thou rememberest me !  
And like to far-off waters falling,  
I hear thee, from the distance, calling, —  
Eurydice ! Beloved Eurydice !

In thy bright world, I know,  
The firstlings of the Spring begin to blow ;  
Moss-violet and saffron daffodil  
Their perfumes new distil,  
And through the veiled elysian hours, —  
Sweeter for wafted scent of citron-flowers, —  
Voices of nightingales soft come and go.

The halcyon again  
 Contented broods beside the quiet main ;  
 The ringdove tells her wound  
 With throbbing breast, and undulating sound  
 Which still, thy passion wronging,  
 Awakes in thee the wilder, lonelier longing.  
 And still my buried heart reflects thy pain !

Of yore I had a dream :  
 I thought — the awful sentinel asleep —  
 Thou, with that lyre divine, supreme,  
 Which first drew Argo downward to the deep,  
 Entering here, where chains are never riven,  
 Had with thy golden strain, Apollo given,  
 Taught Dis, the pitiless, himself, to weep :

I had a dream of yore :  
 I thought love, mightier than death,  
 Wide opened the inexorable door,  
 And offered me pure draughts of sun-warmed  
 breath.  
 I saw thy form ; trembling, I seemed to follow, —  
 When, sudden, to these rayless caverns hollow  
 Fate caught me back — thee to behold no more !

. . . . .

Yet still I wait for thee !  
 And surely thou wilt come again to me !  
 The hours delay ; I make no moan, —

Apart from thee, — yet not alone,  
Sweeter than far-off music sighing,  
I hear thy voice forever crying : —

“ Eurydice ! — lost, lost Eurydice ! ”

## BEAUTY'S PATH

ALL ugliness wears on its brow the brand  
Of Time and Dissolution ; from of old,  
Its doubtful journey through a shifting sand,  
The life in its ophidian breast is cold.  
But beauty's path is one forever bright'ning  
In glory to each far horizon's rim ;  
Warm in the rose and golden in the lightning,  
Love's altar flame, the upward way to Him, —  
Beauty, transcending all that bans and bars,  
Moves as the light moves on, eternal as the stars !

Too well acquaint with passions that benumb,  
Earth is with them no more in kind accord.  
'Tis only by ascending one may come  
Where waits for her the new, the unexplored.  
She longs — ah, how she longs ! — to break asunder  
Her ancient chains, to lave in morning dew,  
To stand a little space 'mid realms of wonder,  
To feel her nearness to the good and true.  
She longs for beauty — vernal through the years —  
To touch the dried-up spring and fount of happy  
tears !



## FRITZ SCHEEL

### A TRIBUTE

HE gave his life to Music, — gave —  
For love, not hire, — himself denying ;  
His body rests, o'erwearied, in the grave,  
But Music lives and gives him life undying.

In the deep silence, may he hear  
Such harmonies as he could wake,  
And O, may some faint accents reach his ear  
From the great City's heart that sorrows for his  
sake !

## REPROACH NOT DEATH

REPROACH not Death, nor charge to him, in wonder,  
The lives that he doth separate awhile,  
But think how many hearts that ache, asunder,  
Death — pitying Death — doth join and reconcile !

## MARS — 1907

In the blue, cloudless heaven  
A single star,  
Lone torch and lamp of even,  
Burning afar ;

Not with the radiance tender  
Of other stars,  
But with insistent splendor, —  
Celestial Mars !

Above the summits hoary  
Of ancient hills,  
It yet pours out a glory  
On lakes and rills,

As when Selene passes  
Across the night  
And her fair image glasses,  
Leaving its light.

Strange planet ! Thou dost awe me,  
As by a spell ;  
Thou dost uplift and draw me  
Where thou dost dwell !

Thy mysteries to capture  
Let others guess ;  
Mine — mine to feel with rapture  
Thy beauteousness.

## BESIDE A PLEASANT SHORE

I LAY upon my narrow bed,  
And dreamed life's happy moments o'er ;  
I thought that love my footsteps led  
Beside a pleasant shore.

Care for a moment loosed its grasp,  
And breathing deep the fragrant brine, —  
My hand locked in my lover's clasp, —  
I felt his pulses throb with mine ;

And dear contentment seemed my right, —  
There roaming from the world apart ;  
I saw his eyes, I felt their light  
Beam through the shadows, in my heart ;

And waves, and trees — all nature — sang  
A paeon by that pleasant shore.  
Then I awoke, and with a pang  
Remembered that we loved no more.

## THE SUN-DIAL

THEY that read my message clear,  
When the sun is shining near,  
Know that moments tarry not  
Though I keep no record here.

Noiseless as the river's flow,  
Onward still the moments go ;  
Naught delays them — yet they be  
Freighted for Eternity !

As the sand drops from the glass,  
Unreturning, so they pass ;  
And the Power that bids them fall  
Knows their value — each and all !

## RETROSPECT

How had it been, my belovèd,  
Had Fate united us sooner, —  
In the bright days when our hearts  
First dreamed of loving? —

When — a thrice exquisite vision —  
Hope, all her lute-strings unbroken,  
Smilingly beckoned us on —  
Wooed us to follow? —

When our youth, eager, expectant, —  
Trusting the north as the south wind,  
Hardly, its pulses a-throb,  
Staid life's unfolding?

Had I been more to you, dearer —  
Bearing my myrtle and roses —  
Than, as I came, crowned with rue,  
Weighted with sorrow,

Seeing both light and its shadow,  
Taught both of truth and illusion,  
Knowing earth's rapture and pain, —  
Sharing earth's travail?

More had I been to you — dearer? . . .  
Deep in my heart a voice answers,  
Healing the sense of unworth,  
Whispering comfort : —

“ Love takes no counsel of prudence ;  
Wherefore men, timid and doubting,  
Marvelling oft at his choice,  
Charge him with blindness ;

“ But — this believe ! — not Apollo,  
Clothed in his glory celestial,  
Bears such a light in his breast  
As that which Eros

“ Holds in the heart of his darkness,  
Guards as a torch never failing,  
Given to guide him where waits  
His sole desire ! ”



THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

1836-1907

WE celebrate with pomp and pride  
A Cromwell or a Wellington ;  
We venerate who, self-denied,  
Earth's higher victories have won ;  
But through the all-remembering years,  
We *love* who give us smiles and tears.

The voice that charmed us may grow still,  
The poet cease to weave his spell :  
Ascended to the skyey hill  
Remote, where the immortals dwell, —  
Time to our thought but more endears  
Who gave us smiles and gave us tears.

## THE PILGRIM

ONCE a man set forth at morning,  
Journeying with eager footstep,  
Onward over fields new-wakened,  
Where the dew lay on the blossoms,  
Like to softly gleaming opals.

All the earth, refreshed by slumber,  
In the early light and tender  
Wore a green, benignant beauty ;  
And his heart sang high within him,  
As the birds sang in the branches.

On he sped with fond impatience, —  
While the world took on new wonder, —  
Till he came unto a river  
Where there waiting stood an angel,  
Dark-browed, but with look celestial.

Then, appalled, the pilgrim started : —  
“Death ! Awaitest thou my coming —  
Here, where least I thought to meet thee ?  
It is Love that I am seeking !”

Very gently smiled the angel,  
Dark-browed, with the look celestial :

"I am Love, — thyself hast named me ;  
Yet thou fearest ! Lo ! I leave thee,  
Till as now, thou come to find me."

. . . . .

Once again the man, at sunrise,  
Journeyed forth, — his step less buoyant, —  
Passing over fields new-wakened,  
Where the dew lay on the blossoms  
Like to softly gleaming opals.

Once again Earth, fresh from slumber,  
In the early light and tender  
Wore her green and mystic beauty ;  
Yet his heart sang not within him  
As the birds sang in the branches.

Onward still, without impatience,  
Through a world whose charm half pained  
him,  
Journeying, — behold ! — the river  
And the long-forgotten angel —  
Dark-browed, with the look celestial !

As of old, the pilgrim started,  
And his pale cheek flushed with anger :  
"Death, thy pledge ! Thou hast betrayed me !  
Naught have I and thou in common :  
It is *Life* that I am seeking !"

With transfiguring smile the angel,  
Whose whole look now showed celestial,  
Answered : — “ Is it Life thou seekest ?  
Be at rest, thou weary pilgrim !  
Seek no further : thou hast found me.”

## MOTHER-LOVE

THINK not of love as of a debt —  
Due or in May or in December !  
Nay, rather, for a time, forget ;  
Life always helps us to remember !

A child whom harmless toys beguile  
To loiter for a little while,  
Put heart into your play, and then,  
When you are tired — come home again !

Fair, yet how fragile, pleasure's rose ! —  
How vain the toil to make it stronger !  
It blooms — it withers, — but love knows  
A sweeter blossom that lives longer !

“THE SENSE OF TEARS IN MORTAL  
THINGS ”

WHY does great beauty waken in the soul,  
Together with the pleasure it inspires,  
Sadness and inaccessible desires? —  
Why, in our joy anticipating dole,  
Ask we for lovely things a lasting goal,  
Though knowing well their destiny requires  
That, wasted and consumed by their own fires,  
They pay on earth, full soon, Death's heavy toll?

Nay, love! The seed may fail within the sod,  
But beauty fails not. Though it seem to die,  
It lights a quenchless torch in Hades' portal;  
A gift benignant as a smile of God,  
Through myriad fading forms it mounts on high,  
And at the last creates beauty that is immortal!

## AN AMERICAN AT LINCOLN

THE vast cathedral-crown of the high hill,  
The long, low-vaulted nave, the transepts where  
The light is glory shed through windows rare  
In rainbow tintings : glory deep and still,  
Gift of a past forever present there !

Beyond the lantern, the carved Gothic Choir,  
And, as interpreting the hallowed place  
Athrob with harmonies, a boyish face —  
English, yet with the look of awed desire  
Which speaks America, — the younger race.

In the half parted lips without a smile,  
In the whole rapt, impassioned gaze,  
I read the travail of the distant days,  
The wistful hunger of the Long Exile —  
The yearning that survives through all delays :

I read thy soul, my Country ! thou dear Land  
Across the deep and all-dividing sea !  
I read thy soul and theirs who founded thee  
With sacrifices few could understand —  
Renouncing and enduring silently.

And I perceived that thou hast still retained  
Their strength to toil, their courage to resist :  
That seeking ardently whate'er they missed,  
Thou hast remained — in spite of all, remained —  
That which they made thee — an idealist !

And once again I felt how blest it is  
To hunger and to thirst : anew I saw  
That by eternal high-appointed law,  
Sublimity and beauty most are his  
In whom they move the deepest thrill of awe !



## AFFINITY

ALL are not strangers whom we so misname :  
Man's free-born spirit, which no rule can tame,  
    Careless of time, o'er vasty distance led,  
Still finds its own where alien altars flame,  
    Still greets its own, amongst the deathless dead !

## TWO BROTHERS

My brother's face is turned from me ;  
He sees a thing I must not see, —  
Alas ! what may the vision be ?

His form is wasted as with pain ;  
A fever feeds upon his brain  
Whose fire, extinguished, burns again.

Sometimes he seems to hear a cry, —  
And the ravens croak on the turrets nigh,  
And the echoes shudder as they die.

Sometimes a cloud o'er his sight is cast,  
And something viewless, whirling past,  
Is borne away on the moaning blast.

And still his face is turned from me,  
To hide the thing I must not see, —  
Alas ! what may the vision be ?

. . . . .

Her lips apart, her blue eyes wide,  
My mother lay in her state and pride, —  
The fairest thing that yet had died !

Like a royal rose, — the story saith, —  
Peerless and pale, with a rose's breath  
At her parted lips, she lay in death.

Her braids were held by a jewelled dart, —  
And, where her bodice fell apart,  
A jewelled dagger pierced her heart.

To find her foe, men strove in vain ;  
They sought again and yet again, —  
But no one mourned with my brother's  
    pain ;

For he had loved her from the hour  
His father won her with that dower  
Of beauty, rare as an aloe's flower ;

And she loved him till our father died ;  
Then something — was it grief or pride ? —  
Made her as marble at his side.

They say — the vassals of our race —  
She wore thenceforth a wintry grace,  
Like the frozen scorn on her fair dead face ;

And though my brother strove at morn  
And eve to comfort her, forlorn,  
She met him still with that cruel scorn.

O poor, my Mother ! Soon, they say,  
She hid herself with her child away,  
And looked no longer on the day ;

But sometimes, when our towers were  
white, —  
Bathed in the moon's celestial light, —  
Her casement opened on the night

All tremulous with mystery,  
And, motionless, without a sigh,  
She stood there, gazing on the sky ;

And they who saw her then, declare  
There was nor pride nor passion there, —  
Only a tearless, mute despair.

I knew her not, — or if I knew,  
Forgot her quickly, as children do, —  
Alas ! as little children do ;

But when she died, men say that I  
So plaintive wailed in the chamber nigh,  
That summoned thither by the cry,

They brought my brother ; who, that hour,  
Bore me away to this lonely tower —  
This fortress of our ancient power,

Where ever near me, night and day, —  
And happiest with me to stay, —  
He kept the vexing world away. . . .

Ah, then, he did not seem to see  
The haunting thing so constantly! —  
Dear God! what may the riddle be?

. . . . .

Mother! I scarce have grieved for you, —  
So close to me my brother drew —  
So gave me all the joys I knew, —

But I am frightened now, and cry,  
Stretching my arms out to the sky.  
Without my brother's love, I die!

And though I do not understand  
Where lies yon far fair Heavenly Land,  
I think that soon, hand locked in hand,

We two will find you where you dwell —  
Will see the face he loved so well,  
And, weeping, all our sorrows tell.

And then, I know, through me beguiled,  
You'll smile on him, — as once you smiled, —  
Who was so good to your lonely child!

## CONFLICT AND REST

THROUGH the long voyage we may welcome day,  
Glad when the night is gone,  
So many threat'ning perils of the way  
Vanish before the dawn ;

And yet a deeper darkness we may crave  
When strife indeed is past,  
And we from stress of tempest and of wave  
Are nearing port at last.

## CHILD-FANCIES

### ASPHODEL

THE children played at naming, every one  
Her favorite blossom, in the mild June even ;  
When, at the last, the others having done,  
A little maid — her years but numbered seven —

Stood shyly forth and answered in her turn :  
“Pale violets I love, — and love full well  
Red poppies, which the elves for torches burn, —  
But for my own I choose — the asphodel.”

Indignant stared the children ; then they cried —  
Amid their pastime ready still for strife —  
“The asphodel ! You only choose through pride  
A flower you never saw in all your life !”

Abashed, the culprit hung her pretty head,  
As she accusèd of a crime had been ;  
Then, bravely, with conviction sweet she said : —  
“But I love *best* the flower I have not seen !”

Ah, wistful child ! Such lonely dreams as thine  
Others have cherished in their hearts, I ween, —

And, grateful for *all* good, with thee incline  
To love the best the flower they have not seen !

## II

## GATHERED WILD-FLOWERS

I 'VE brought you some flowers, mother !  
Please look at them, mother, look !  
See this one ! — and here 's another  
I found beside the brook !

They 're very warm, for I held them tight ;  
You 'll want them, I know, to keep,  
When they wake again and you see them right, —  
But now they 're all asleep.



## DEARTH

As one who faring o'er a desert plain  
Sees fountains clear in the mirage arise,  
And, parchèd, longs the nectar sweet to gain  
Which still before him flies —  
So, wistfully, half doubting, half-believing,  
Scornful of hope — yet hopeful, self-deceiving,  
I thirst for love, which wastes before my eyes.

## MID-OCEAN

A WASTE of heaving waters to the far horizon's rim,  
And over them a vault of leaden gray;  
No warmer tint or shading to relieve the aspect  
dim,

Save where the riven billows break away,  
Revealing as we part them to the left hand and  
the right,  
Beneath each curling crest of foam, the marvellous  
green light.

Here midst the heaving billows — this unending  
stretch of sea

Where scarce an ocean-bird has strength to fly,  
Unnumbered leagues from any strand where habi-  
tations be,

Alone, no comrade vessel sailing nigh,  
The deep, unplumbed, beneath us, and, above, a  
frowning dome, —

I do but turn my eyes on thee, and straightway it  
is home!

## ON THE DEATH OF LADY CURZON

JULY 17, 1906

INTO the light where beauty doth not pale,  
Into the glory that can never fail,  
    Beyond our yearning care, she passed from view.  
Two nations loved and claimed her, — English  
    flower, —  
One gave her birth, one gave a regal dower,  
But both — ah, both forgot how Heaven must love  
    her too !

## BEREFT

DEATH took away from me my heart's desire, —  
Full suddenly, without a word of warning;  
Froze with benumbing touch her body's fire,  
And darkened her young morning.

Death hid her then where she is safe, men say, —  
Imprisoned in a deep-digged grave and hollow,  
Where grief and pain may never find a way,  
Nor any torment follow.

Safe! — and because of fear, they deem 't was best  
For her, perchance, — this thing which they call  
dying,  
But cold she could not be against my breast  
As there where she is lying!

Sometimes I dream, with sudden, wild delight,  
That she escapes the cruel bonds that bind her,  
And fond I seek through all the throbbing night,  
But never, never find her!

Sometimes — But have the dead then no regrets? —  
Ah, me! I think, though she hath so bereft me,  
My loved one cannot be where she forgets  
How lonely she hath left me!

## THE MARTYR JEWS

THEIR fathers wronged thee, Master, long ago :

Rejected thee, because they knew thee not  
Whom it had been their highest peace to know,  
And nobler dreams forgot,  
Preferred a kingdom of this world to thee,  
And saw thee sacrificed upon a tree.

Yet thou in death — even in death, didst pray : —

“ Father, forgive ! They know not what they do ! ”

But what of those, more culpable than they —

Oh, more than they, untrue,

Who, in thy name, dear Christ ! have tortured men,  
And crucified thee countless times since then ?

## LE GRAND SALUT

“ Major Dreyfus, in the name of the Republic and of the people of France,  
I proclaim you a knight of the Legion of Honour ”

THERE is a power in innocence, a might  
Which, clothed in weakness, makes injustice vain :  
A strength, o’ertopping reason to explain,  
Which bears it — though deep-buried out of sight —  
Slowly and surely upward to the light :  
A conscious certainty amidst its pain  
That, robbed of all things, it shall all regain,  
Through that eternal law which guards the right.

O Dreyfus ! Thy dear country has restored  
More than *thine* honour in her hour supreme.  
Noble, indeed, though able so to err,  
God spared thee to her that she might redeem  
Herself, and hand thee back thy blameless sword.  
Listen ! the world salutes — not only thee, but  
her !

## INHERITOR

SAY not the gods are cruel,  
    Since man himself is kind —  
Man, who could give no tenderness  
    If, impotent and blind,  
He stretched appealing hands on high  
    No tenderness to find, —

Who, wakened to compassion,  
    No longer stands apart,  
Careless of others' suffering,  
    But, rather, shares the smart,  
Because of pity drawn from out  
    The Universal Heart, —

Who feels within him glowing  
    A spark that dares aspire,  
Flame-like, unto supernal things,  
    With never-quenched desire,  
And knows that Heaven bestowed on him  
    A spark of its own fire !

## WHEN YOU CAME

DEAR, when you came the day was bright ;  
The moments, roseate to my sight,  
    Flew by me, and my heart was glad  
    Without you ; but I loved you, lad —  
Loved in my own despite !

As morn, I thought, so would be night,  
Nor feared eclipsing cloud, nor blight —  
    Nay, fancied naught to life could add,  
    Dear, when you came !

And now — the good I deemed my right —  
But you with love will still requite  
    The follies that have made you sad !  
    You smile — there — whisper ! Nothing had  
Illumined for me love's altar-light,  
    Dear, when you came !



## THE YOUNG WIFE

SHE leaned above the river's sedgy brink —  
The little wife — half-minded there to drink  
Forgetfulness of all the grief and pride  
That overwhelmed her spirit like a tide.

She had so blindly trusted ! Yet doubt grew —  
Whence it had sprung, alas ! she hardly knew, —  
A hydra-headed monster that devoured  
Her happiness ere fully it had flowered.

He who had been her truth ! — could he betray ?  
“ Ah, let me die,” she cried, “ or quickly stay,  
Thou who bestowed, unasked, this gift of breath,  
Imaginings more terrible than death ! ”

Lone and forespent, she leaned her heavily  
Against a willow ; when she seemed to see —  
Doubting if that indeed she saw or dreamed,  
So full of mystery the vision seemed —

A form unknown, ineffable in grace,  
With look compassionate bent on her face.  
“ Thy tears have moved the Heart Omnipotent,  
Wherefore I come, to thee in pity sent, — ”

So, as she thought, the wondrous vision spake, —  
“ To serve thee, if I may, e’en though I make  
Confession, grievous unto me, who know  
My folly was forgiven long ago. . . .

“ A youth was I who fondly pleasure sought,  
Careless to ask how dearly it was bought;  
Who passed my days in idleness, nor guessed  
How close the coils of evil round me pressed,

“ Till, like some swimmer boastful of his strength  
Who dares too far, I faced the truth at length —  
Perceived the awful distance I had come,  
And, battling back, despaired of reaching home.

“ Then I had perished in my utter need,  
Had no one trusted me beyond my meed;  
But — I reached port at last, my fate withstood,  
Because one woman still believed me good.”

Softly the vision faded, and was gone.  
The young wife by the river stood alone;  
Musing, she lingered there a little while,  
And to her pensive lips there came a smile.

## LOVE NEVER IS TOO LATE

LOVE never is too late ; it sums,  
    Within itself, all that is lasting gain,  
And, or at morn or midnight, comes  
    With blessings in its train.

We tarry, slow to give, alas !  
    But though delayed, love never is too late —  
Love that has power beyond the grave to pass  
    And enter Heaven's gate !

## THE CHRIST OF THE ANDES

FAR, far the mountain-peak from me  
Where lone he stands, with look caressing ;  
Yet from the valley, wistfully  
I lift my dreaming eyes, and see  
His hand stretched forth in blessing.

Never bird sings nor blossom blows  
Upon that summit chill and breathless,  
Where throned he waits amid the snows ;  
But from his presence wide outflows  
Love that is warm and deathless !

O Symbol of the great release  
From war and strife ! — unfailing fountain  
To which we turn for joy's increase,  
Fain would we climb to heights of Peace —  
*Thy* peace upon the mountain !

## EARTH'S BLOSSOMS

EARTH has her blossoms, and the sea his shells  
    Wrought with as fine a workmanship, and fair  
    As they had been some god's peculiar care ;  
And in the heart of each a spirit dwells  
Whose voice, in flowers, — for they to earth be-  
    long —  
    Is but a perfume, evanescent, sweet,  
    While in the sea-born shell, as seemeth meet,  
It is an echo faint of an unending song !

## ECHO CONSOLATRIX

I SAID, "She is gone from the grieving earth —  
The Maiden, — Spring ; in the realms of Dis  
She reigns o'er a world of tears and dearth,  
With a homesick heart that yearns for this :  
Frozen the meadows, the fields lie bare,  
And afar, 'mid the fragrant dusk of her hair,  
The violets dream of the light, in vain.  
She is gone ! — ah, will she return again ?"  
A voice, breathed low, " Again."

I said, " In this joyless heart of me  
Is a winter chill and comfortless :  
I tire of the wail of the wind-swept sea,  
My soul is afraid of its loneliness.  
Is there a land, as poets tell,  
Where beauty and love — as the asphodel  
Unchanging — inhale an immortal air ?  
And my little lad ? — shall I find him there ?"  
The voice made answer : " There !"

## JOHN HAY

AMID ferns and mosses brown,  
From the little mountain-town,  
Through the driving rain they bore him,  
Kearsarge frowning down :

Onward bore him, wrapped from sight  
Under palms and blossoms white, —  
While the grieving hearts of thousands  
Followed through the night

To that grave, love-sanctified,  
Where, in the full summer-tide,  
Low they laid him, who had cherished  
Sympathies world-wide.

Honored grave ! Yet Azrael's dart  
Only slays the mortal part,  
And they die not who have written  
On the human heart.

Sad Roumania, far Peking,  
East with West, his praise to sing  
Who deemed justice more than power,  
Hither tribute bring ;

And the mother-land who bore —  
She whom most he labored for —  
    Bows her head in sorrow, knowing  
He returns no more.

Fame has crowned her own again,  
Writing with illumined pen, —  
    Lincoln's friend, who loved and truly  
Served his fellow-men.



## PRIVILEGE

BLEST is the right to share  
The grief of hearts forlorn, —  
With other men to bear  
What must by men be borne ;  
For night bestows dawn's orient rose  
And glories of the morn ;

And as its shadow-wing  
Lends to the sunlight worth,  
So out of suffering  
Arise the joys of earth —  
The good and ill, united still  
And offspring of one birth.

Great is the gift of life  
To him who lives indeed,  
A partner in the strife,  
The toil, the pain, that speed —  
Like hidden rills veined through the hills —  
Life's ocean-deeps to feed !

## DÄI NIPPON

APART from all,

“ Child of the World’s old age,”

Heedful of naught beyond the billowy wall

That closely girt her island hermitage,

She pondered still, with half-averted look,

The early lessons of the great World-book,

Nor cared to turn the page,

For a strange dread

Possessed her. To invoke

Aid of her gods she tried, — scarce comforted

That countless barrier-waves about her broke ;

But when, with bold command, in Yeddo bay

A squadron anchored, — oh, prodigious day ! —

The Orient awoke !

Though one long blind,

At first in fruitless quest

Must grope her course, yet, with enlarging mind,

She quickly clearer saw ; and from her breast

Sent forth brave sons — of her new hunger  
taught —

Who, one by one returning, to her brought

The wisdom of the West.

Then earth beheld,  
With awe and wonderment,  
Goliath by this stripling nation felled,  
Which — rising by no tedious ascent —  
Swift as the upward flight of wind-swept flame,  
Leapt from obscurity to dazzling fame, —  
Star of the Orient !

And yet she won  
Sublimer victories,  
Who, high enlightened all excess to shun,  
Did not exact remorseless penalties,  
Nor force a brave and fallen foe to drain  
Humiliation's brimming cup of pain  
Down to the poisoned lees.

In lieu of things  
Ephemeral — less worth,  
She full-revealed the sweep of her strong  
wings,  
And gained the suffrage of the grateful  
earth ;  
Choosing, as war should from her realms de-  
part,  
To give herself to the enduring Art  
That was her own at birth.

Ah, great Japan, —  
Who, staying griefs appalling,

Approved thyself magnanimous to man, —

The World, that long had felt thy charm en-  
thralling,

Has laid full many laurels on thy brow ;

But with a new, diviner accent now

She hears *the East a-calling !*

## A LITTLE SONG

ROSES are but for a day,  
Amaranths endure forever ;  
Joys there be that fade away,  
Dreams that perish never ;  
But, whate'er the future's holding, —  
Crown of all, all else enfolding, —  
Love lives on !

Well they know, who with content  
Hear his oft-repeated story,  
How to earthly glooms are lent  
Reflexes of glory !  
Rapture's first and final giver,  
Star of Charon's rayless river, —  
Love lives on !

## THE EMPTY HOUSE

I SEEMED to see thy spirit leave the clay  
That was its mortal tenement of late ;  
I seemed to see it falter at the gate  
Of the New Life, as seeking to obey  
Some inner law, yet doubtful of the way  
Provided for its passage, by that fate  
Which makes birth pain, and gives to death such  
state  
And dignity, when soul withdraws its sway.

A tremor of the pale and noble brow,  
A tightening of the lips, and thou wast gone —  
Gone whither? Ah, the hush of death's abyss!  
All tenantless thy beauteous form lay now  
As the cicada's fragile shell outgrown,  
Or as the long-forsaken, lonely chrysalis.

## KINDRED

TENDER grass in April springing,  
Scent of lilacs wet with rain,  
Bluebird jubilantly singing  
Snatches of a loved refrain,

Falcon soaring high above me,  
Light of stars in deeps divine,  
Creeping earth-bound things that move me  
To compassion, ye are mine !

Wind in varied cadence playing  
Mystic runes on harps unseen,  
Blossom hardily delaying  
Where lost summer late hath been,

Shadow drifting o'er the mountain,  
Mist blown inward from the sea,  
Hidden spring and bubbling fountain, —  
Ye are mine and parts of me !

What am I? The stars have made me,  
And the dust to which I cleave,  
Rivers, and the hills that aid me,  
Past and future, morn and eve,

Nightshade lightly plucked unknowing,  
Roses fondly twined with rue,  
Harvestings of mine own sowing,  
And from fields I never knew.

I have gained 'mid loss and capture  
Strength not found in vanquishing,  
Sharing oft the mounting rapture,  
Trailing oft the broken wing ;

Kindred with the sunlight streaming  
Where nor dew nor rain-drop gleams,  
With the parchèd desert dreaming  
Incommunicable dreams,

Laid in cavern-bed at even,  
Throned on rose-flushed Apennine, —  
Multitudinous earth and heaven,  
Naught ye hold that is not mine !



## COURAGE

'T is the front toward life that matters most —

    The tone, the point of view,  
The constancy that in defeat  
    Remains untouched and true ;

For death in patriot fight may be

    Less gallant than a smile,  
And high endeavor, to the gods,  
    Seems in itself worth while !

## CRUEL LOVE — ANACREONTIC

I LOOKED from out my window once  
And saw Love standing there ;  
No cloak had he to cover him,  
His dimpled feet were bare,  
And fast and chill the snowflakes fell  
On his ambrosial hair.

He lifted up to mine a face  
Filled with celestial light ;  
Fond, fond with pity grew my heart  
To see his hapless plight,  
And down I sped to offer him  
Warm shelter for the night : —

“Come in, come in, thou tender child,  
A wanderer from thine own !  
Hath all the world abandoned thee,  
That thou art thus alone ?  
Come in, come in ! that I straightway  
For others may atone !”

I took his icy hand in mine, —  
Why swifter throbbed each vein ?

Was it the impulse of my blood  
To ease his frozen pain? —  
Yet still his lips refused to smile,  
Still fell his tears like rain.

Bashful he seemed, as half inclined  
To shiver there apart:  
I led him closer to the fire,  
I drew him to my heart:  
Ah, cruel Love! my trustful breast  
He wounded with a dart!

Ah, cruel Love! He'smiled at last —  
A wondrous smile to see!  
And passing from my sheltering door,  
With step alert and free,  
He took my warmth, my joy with him, —  
His tears he left to me!

“EACH AND ALL”

I SAW a soul contended for  
By Evil and by Good ;  
And watching with solicitude —  
As if my yearning could  
Some succor bring — I trembled  
Whiles the tempter was withstood.

Yet, soul — my soul, what meant the strife  
To thee? — what power had  
Another's wrong to make thee feel  
Thyself so wronged and sad?  
And when at last Good overcame, —  
O why wast *thou* so glad?

## SAINT THERESA

WEARY and long the winding way ;  
Yet as I fare, to comfort me,  
Still o'er and o'er I tell the beads  
Of love's perfected rosary.

The fire that once hath pierced the heart,  
If from above, must upward flame,  
Nor falter till it find at last  
The burning fountain whence it came.

O fire of love within my breast —  
O pain that pleads for no surcease —  
Fill me with fervor ! — more and more,  
Give me thy passion and thy peace !

O love, that mounts to paths of day  
Untraversed by the soaring lark,  
O love, through all the silent night  
A lamp to light the boundless dark,

O love, whose dearest pangs I bear,  
This heart — this wounded heart — transform !  
That all who seek its shelter may  
There find a refuge safe and warm.

Were there no heaven of high reward,  
Man's service here to crown and bless,  
Were there no hell, — I, for love's sake,  
Would toil with ardent willingness.

And if — O Thou that pitiest  
The fallen, lone, and tempest-tost! —  
If, Love Divine, Thou wilt but save  
Whom *I* do love, none shall be lost!

IN MEMORY OF CAROLINE FURNESS  
JAYNE

COULD'ST thou — thou, also, die, whom life so  
cherished?

Could'st thou go from us, in thy beauteous June,  
Leaving a sense of joy untimely perished,  
Of music stilled too soon?

We had not dreamed, fair child, that thou before us  
Should'st find the meadows of the asphodel —  
Should'st hear, ere we, "the high imagined chorus," —  
But, ah, for thee, 't is well!

Not thine to creep reluctant to death's portal:  
Thy spirit from the mirk of transient things  
Rose radiant to the light of the immortal,  
With eager, outstretched wings!

For the grave gods, bestowing every blessing  
Upon a child of Earth, ere grief should come,  
Crowned thee, in youth, with the mild touch caress-  
ing  
That calls their loved ones home!

## AFTER

AFTER the darkness, dawning,  
And stir of the rested wing ;  
Fresh fragrance from the meadow,  
Fresh hope in everything !

After the winter, springtime  
And dreams, that flower-like throng ;  
After the tempest, silence ;  
After the silence, song.

After the heat of anger,  
Love, that all life enwraps ;  
After the stress of battle,  
The trumpet sounding " taps."

After despair and doubting,  
A faith without alloy,  
God here and over yonder, —  
The end of all things — joy !



## THE VIOLIN

HE gave me all, and then he laid me by.

Straining my strings to breaking, with his pain,  
He voiced an anguish, through my wailing cry,  
Never to speak again.

He pressed his cheek against me, and he wept —

Had we been glad together over much? —  
Emotions that within me deep had slept  
Grew vibrant at his touch,

And I, who could not ask whence sprung his sorrow

Responsive to a grief I might not know,  
Sobbed as the infant that each mood doth borrow  
Sobs for the mother's woe.

Wild grew my voice and stormy, with his passion,

Lifted at last unto a tragic might ;  
Then swift it changed, in sad and subtle fashion,  
To pathos infinite,

Swooning away beneath his faltering fingers

Till the grieved plaints seemed, echoless, to die ;  
When, calm, he rose, and with a touch that lingers,  
Laid me forever by.

Forever ! Ah, he comes no more — my lover !  
And all my spirit wrapped in trance-like sleep,  
Darkling I dream that such a night doth cover  
His grief with hush as deep.

## PER ASPERA

THANK God, a man can grow !

He is not bound

With earthward gaze to creep along the ground :

Though his beginnings be but poor and low,

Thank God, a man can grow !

The fire upon his altars may burn dim,

The torch he lighted may in darkness fail,

And nothing to rekindle it avail, —

Yet high beyond his dull horizon's rim,

Arcturus and the Pleiads beckon him.

## THE HERMIT

LISTEN! O listen! 'T is the thrush — God bless  
him!

How marvellously sweet the song he sings!  
All Nature seems to listen and caress him,  
And Silence even closer folds her wings  
Lest she should miss one faintly throbbing note  
Of high-wrought rapture, from that flutelike throat.

The warbling world, itself, is hushed about him;  
No bird essays the amœbean strain:  
Each knows the soul of Music — full without him —  
Could bear no more, and rivalry were vain.  
So, Daphnis singing in the tamarisk shade,  
All things grew silent, of a sound afraid.

The aspens by the lake have ceased to shiver,  
As if the very zephyrs held their breath:  
Hearken how, wave on wave, with notes that quiver,  
It rises now — that song of life and death! —  
“O holy! holy!” Was it Heaven that called  
My spirit, by love's ecstasy enthralled?

## THANKSGIVING

Now gracious plenty rules the board,  
And in the purse is gold ;  
By multitudes in glad accord  
Thy giving is extolled.  
Ah, suffer *me* to thank Thee, Lord,  
For what thou dost withhold !

I thank Thee that howe'er we climb  
There yet is something higher ;  
That though through all our reach of time  
We to the stars aspire,  
Still, still beyond us burns sublime  
The pure sidereal fire !

I thank Thee for the unexplained,  
The hope that lies before,  
The victory that is not gained, —  
O Father, more and more  
I thank Thee for the unattained,  
The good we hunger for !

I thank Thee for the voice that sings  
To inner depths of being ;  
For all the spread and sweep of wings,  
From earthly bondage freeing ;  
For mystery — the dream of things  
Beyond our power of seeing !

## POETRY

CONTEMPLATIVE and fair, with look divine,  
Her wistful vision fixed on the unseen, —  
The future hers, as the long past has been, —  
She waits apart. Who disregard her shrine,  
Who pour to her libations of red wine,  
Who heal their griefs at her loved Hippocrene,  
She noteth not, — enwrapt in thought serene,  
And pondering grave meanings, line by line.

She has envisaged the veiled heart of things —  
Has passed through Purgatory, and her way,  
Darkling, unravelled through the deeps of  
Hell ;  
And thence arising where the blessèd dwell,  
Has touched the stars with her aspiring wings,  
And knows that she is deathless as are they !



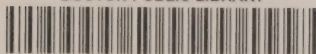
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